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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the effectiveness of teacher aides in the eight Indianapolis Model Cities Schools as perceived by themselves and others. These paraprofessional personnel were hired for two basic purposes: (1) to provide additional help to teachers and children in the classroom, and (2) to provide career opportunities for a limited number of indigenous residents from the school attendance areas. These two basic purposes were resultant from the apparent need for additional adults to whom children could relate and interact in a positive way during the school day, as well as an approach which provided employment opportunities as an encouragement for furthering the formal educational background of those hired as teacher aides. Aides who were hired from this commitment were those whom Model Cities School personnel thought would benefit both the children in the schools and themselves as teacher aides. These determinations were made primarily upon the basis of personal interviews. The formal educational background of those hired varied greatly. Some were high school graduates; others were not. A number of training sessions were held with them to assist them in upgrading their own personal skills and job skills so as to be of greater assistance in the school of their employment. (Author/JM)

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A REPORT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER AIDES IN INDIANAPOLIS MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS

FOR THE

MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS DIRECTOR
INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

April, 1972

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BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

Teacher aides for Model Cities Schools were hired for two basic purposes:

1. to provide additional help to teachers and children in the eight Model Cities Schools and

2. to provide career opportunities for a limited number of indigenous residents from these same school attendance areas.

These two basic purposes were resultant from the apparent need for additional adults to whom children could relate and interact in a positive way during the school day, as well as an approach which provided employment opportunities as an encouragement for furthering the formal educational background of those hired as teacher aides in the Indianapolis Model Cities Schools.

Aides who were hired from this committment were those whom Model Cities School personnel thought would benefit both the children in the schools and themselves as teacher aides. As the investigators understand it, these determinations were made primarily upon the basis of personal interviews.

Screening devices, such as written tests or other approaches were not utilized. The formal educational background of those teacher aides who were hired varied greatly. Some were high school graduates; others were not.

A number of training sessions were held with the Model Cities teacher aides to assist them in upgrading their own personal skills and job skills so as to be of greater assistance in the school of their employment.

The employment of the 60 plus teacher aides under this program represents a sizable investment from the Model Cities Schools Program budget and as such, is a fit topic for study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based upon the dual premises as previously stated, namely, that teacher aides were employed to assist in the education of children in the

schools, and to provide career opportunities, a study of their effectiveness would logically consider these two areas.

Because of the limited time allocated for this study, its focus is strictly with the effectiveness of teacher aides in the eight Model Cities Schools. To adequately study the career opportunities aspects, some measures of changes in the expressed level of self concept of the aides, as well as changes in levels of formal schooling acquired would be necessary.

The present study does not assess the positive changes in level of self concept that may have taken place within the teacher aide themselves during the time they have been employed as teacher aides. The possible improvement in quality of family life because of employment and added income, nor is the expressed feeling of pride in one's work pursued in this study. Upgrading of self through furthering one's formal education could be another positive outgrowth of the model Cities Teacher Aide Program. Again, this is an important consideration in ascertaining the effectiveness of the program, but is not covered in this study. The Model Cities Schools Director, no doubt, has this information which could be included in another report.

To reiterate, this study concerns itself with the effectiveness of teacher aides in the eight Model Cities Schools as perceived by themselves and others.

PROCEDURES EMPLOYED

It could be assumed that teacher aides in the Model Cities Schools are effective, for after all, do they not do supplementary teaching, give drill exercises, and in many ways extend the instructional efforts of the teacher? Do they not also perform a wide variety of non-teaching tasks which free the classroom teacher to spend more time instructing youngsters? In these two areas, instructional (or instruction-related tasks) and non-instructional tasks, the teacher aide does perform a valuable service.

But how can one assess quantitative the effectiveness of teacher aides in these two areas?

A research design which contrasts the academic and affective (improved level of confidence, better self-image, etc.) gains of thos classes utilizing teacher aides and those which do not loom as a possibility. As with many sound theoretical approaches, they weaken upon attempted application. Because of the pervasive influence exerted by both Model Cities teacher aides and Title I teacher aides in these eight schools, such a research design could not be applied.

Literature which addresses itself to the evaluation of the effectiveness of teacher aides attests to the difficulty of such a task. There does not appear to be any simple assessment procedures or instruments available for assessing the effectiveness of teacher aides.

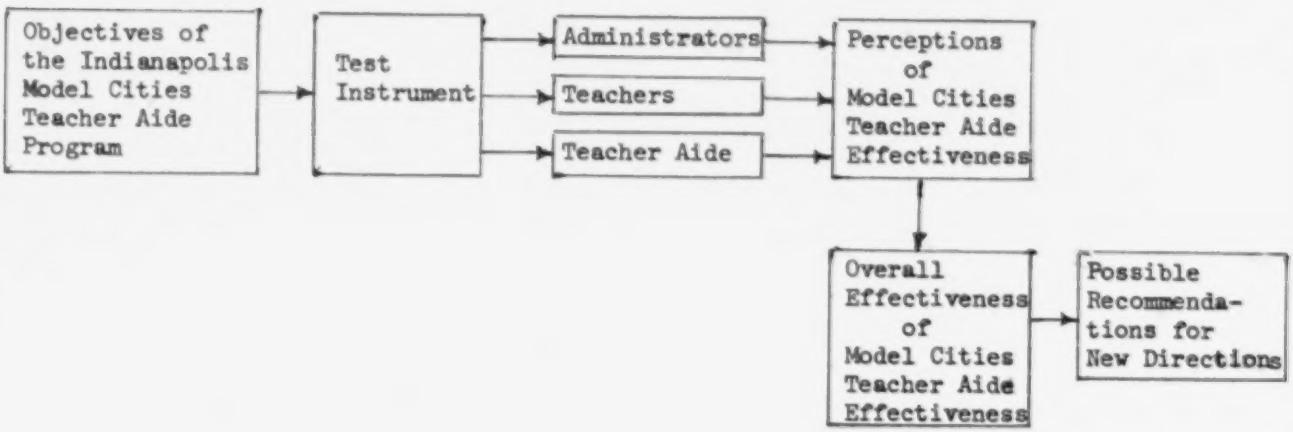
To apply a valid research design to the effectiveness of the Model Cities teacher aides in Indianapolis required that such an assessment must consider the stated objectives of the program. These can be found in the "Teacher Aides Reference Book" (12 pp. mimeograph, dated 1971, 1972).

Once the objectives were recognized, the next step seemed to be to determine the extent to which these objectives are being realized.

Reliable responses could be obtained from administrators, teachers, the Model Cities teacher aides themselves, children served by the teacher aides, and parents in the Model Cities Schools attendance area. Including the last two groups, children and parents, presented a number of problems. The largest one being that in all probability both groups would encounter problems in distinguishing between Model Cities teacher aides and Title I aides who were serving in the same school. For this reason and others not discussed here, these two groups were eliminated from the research design.

It was felt that if administrators, teachers who were working with Model Cities teacher aides, and the teacher aides themselves, could respond independently of each other and in a manner in which they were not individually identified, a quantitative measure of teacher aide effectiveness could be established.

This design is shown below.


Objectives of the Indianapolis Model Cities Teacher Aide Program
Test Instrument
Administrators
Teachers
Teacher Aide
Perceptions of Model Cities Teacher Aide Effectiveness
Overall Effectiveness of Model Cities Teacher Aide Effectiveness
Possible Recommendations for New Directions

Fifteen statements covering the major functions of the Model Cities Schools Teacher Aide program are included in the first part of the instrument designed for assessment of teacher aide effectiveness. Administrators, Teachers, and Model Cities Schools teacher aides were asked to rate each item on a five point scale ranging from high agreement to low agreement regarding the functions performed by the Model Cities Schools teacher aides. (See Appendix.)

The second part of the assessment instrument utilized in this study was a teacher aide time allocation covering six different major task areas. Such an instrument serves as another source of information so as to reveal the percentage of time spent in each task area as perceived by administrators, teachers and teacher aides. (See Appendix.)

FINDINGS

One of the major purposes of the evaluation was to compare the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and aides in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of the Model Cities Schools teacher aides. An analysis of variance indicated some disagreement in the perception of these three groups.

When the perceptions of the administrators were compared with those of the aides, a statistically significant difference was discovered. Aides tended to rate themselves higher in almost all categories.

A COMPARISON OF MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATORS' AND MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS TEACHER AIDES'
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER AIDE EFFECTIVENESS

TABLE 1

SOURCE	SS	DF	MS	F	SIGNIFICANCE
Between	246.53	1	246.53	27.33	> .01
Within	252.63	28	9.02		

When the perceptions of teachers were compared with those of the aides, a statistically significant difference was also found. Again aides tended to rate themselves higher in almost every category.

A COMPARISON OF MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS
TEACHERS' AND MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS TEACHER AIDES'
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER AIDE EFFECTIVENESS

TABLE 2

SOURCE	SS	DF	MS	F	SIGNIFICANCE
Between	456.30	1	466.30	6.82	> .01
Within	18.75	28			

When the perceptions of administrators were compared with those of teachers, no statistically significant difference was uncovered. The responses of these two groups were very similar.

A COMPARISON OF MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATORS' AND TEACHERS'
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER AIDE EFFECTIVENESS

TABLE 3

SOURCE	SS	DF	MS	F	SIGNIFICANCE
Between	32.03	1	32.03	2.397	None
Within	373.98	28	13.56		

The Model Cities Schools teacher aides perceived themselves as being more effective than teachers or administrators perceived them as being in the following areas:

1. reducing the number of clerical tasks performed by teachers
2. assisting teachers in classroom control by providing additional supervision
3. serving as a good adult model for children
4. helping the teacher prepare materials for instructional use
5. contributing to the learning environment of the classroom by arranging bulletin boards or exhibits
6. assisting the teacher in simple housekeeping tasks
7. increasing the general morale of the school
8. helping the teacher prepare materials for instructional use
9. assisting the teacher by operating audio-visual equipment
10. allowing the teacher more teaching time by relieving her of non-teaching tasks and duties

Administrators and aides both perceived the aide as being more effective than the teacher perceived the aide as being in the following areas:

1. comforting children who are emotionally upset or assisting children needing first aid
2. helping the children in drill exercise or seat work
3. helping the children to learn more by working with them on an individual or group basis
4. helping children select library books on their reading and interest level

Administrators and teachers both perceived the aides as being more effective than the aide perceived herself in helping children improve their own self-image by encouragement or positive comments on their school work or efforts.

The mean responses of administrators, teachers, and Model Cities Schools teacher aides are reported in the following table.

MEAN SCORES OF TEACHER AIDE EFFECTIVENESS AS PERCEIVED BY ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS TEACHER AIDES

TABLE 4

STATEMENT	(N=9) ADMINISTRATIONS	(N=92) TEACHERS	(N=54) AIDES	(N=155) OVERALL MEAN
1	3.8	3.6	4.5	3.9
2	3.2	3.3	4.4	3.7
3	3.0	3.7	4.8	4.0
4	3.9	3.6	4.5	4.0
5	4.0	3.4	4.8	4.0
6	4.7	4.3	4.7	4.4
7	4.6	4.1	4.5	4.3
8	4.3	4.3	4.8	4.5
9	3.7	3.0	4.0	3.4
10	3.9	3.6	4.2	3.8
11	3.9	3.4	4.4	3.8
12	2.6	2.7	3.9	3.1
13	3.8	3.2	3.7	3.4
14	3.4	3.8	4.8	4.1
15	3.4	3.1	2.8	3.0

A second aspect of the Model Cities Schools teacher aide evaluation was to help determine the amount of time which the aide devoted to various types of duties each week. There was little disagreement among the three groups in relationship to the various areas in which teacher aide time was allocated. (See Table 5)

Approximately 40% of a teacher aide's time was allocated to instructing children in academic tasks. Teacher aides spent about 14%

of their time with children in non-academic tasks such as loading buses, recreational activities, personal problems, etc. The preparation or correction of instructional materials accounted for 25% of the aide's time. Collecting money, typing, and other non-instructional clerical tasks required approximately 11% of an aide's time. Approximately 9% of an aide's time was spent in housekeeping chores.

PERCENTAGE OF MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS TEACHER AIDE TIME ALLOCATED FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF DUTIES

TABLE 5

TASK	ADMINISTRATORS	TEACHERS	AIDES	OVERALL MEAN
A	40	38	41	40
B	14	14	14	14
C	28	26	24	25
D	8	13	9	11
E	6	8	11	9
Other	4	1	1	1

Some of the teachers, administrators, and aides made additional comments as to the effectiveness of Model Cities Schools Teacher Aides. Some of the comments were:

Favorable

Teacher (Grade 3-4) -
I'm fortunate to have a very dependable, hard-working aide. _____is this person.

Administrator -
Some few give 100% of their time to school related activities and do an excellent job.

Teacher (Grade 3) -
This is my composite view of aides. I have an excellent aide who works with me for an hour every day. Had I just been rating her - _____ _____ - for the time she is with me the marks would be higher in almost every instance. Would that an aide could spend her day with me!

Teacher (Kg.) -
Teacher Aides should not be expected to be substitute teachers. If they do, something should be done about some extra pay, since (or as) this was not the reason we were hired.

I feel the aides could do these tasks if the teacher had time to help them understand. I also feel that, as aides are with the school longer, we as a school, should be able to make better use of them.

As I feel, thinking of children, an aide with more education and more ability would be more helpful. Many of our aides are difficult to train. We have a college student as an aide, and he is good. We need more young men in our program.

Unfavorable

Teacher (Grade 3) -
Question #10 - Mine don't know how to run audio-visual equipment.

Teacher -
Question #3 - If they are trained and more important, if they are willing to be a helper instead of a boss.
Question #10-The need has never come up.
Question #15 -This could be a good attribute, but often the attitude of the aide is a cross one and they seem to be very bossy and critical with the children.

Teacher (Kg.) -
Question #1 - If aides are to do clerical tasks they must be thoroughly trained before they enter the classroom. A teacher does not have the time for instructing them or correcting their work. Aides either can not or will not do clerical work carefully and correctly enough to be trusted with a number of clerical duties.
Question #2 - Have to be directed too often. I feel an aide by now should be aware and willing to perform routine duties, when a teacher is occupied with an immediate need.
Question #4 - Remain seated during Pledge. "Shut up." Poor discipline control. Sitting on furniture (tables-counters). Constant conversation while teacher is busy, during TV programs, etc.
Question #5 - Most aides do too much talking. They are not trained to lead the child into conversation and allow him to express himself. (She underlined to whom children can talk.)
Question #7 - Karnes program is set up with this in mind for aides.

Question #8 - It's a struggle and very time consuming for the teacher to explain, instruct, check and recheck, other than routine things such as mixing paint, tearing paper, checking crayons, etc. (Even those have been hard to teach).
Question #9 - The Karnes program requires "teaching aides."
Question #10- Not very competent.
Question #11- Too much teacher time is spent directing aides.
Question #12- I could tell some interesting stories about bulletin boards.

Other comments -

Teacher -
Question #13- Not done in my room but good idea. We have just gone into units and most of her time is done in clerical work for the units. She will be assigned to individual teachers soon. (Possible that this is the aide's major task.)

Teacher (Grade 2) -
Question #1 - Haven't so far.
Question #8 - Could do more.
Question #11 - Haven't so far.

I do not wish to present a bad image of our Model City Teacher Aide. She has been placed in a unit type situation. She has not been given a definite schedule to follow. The only contact I have had with her is as a helper doing my 35 minutes math period.

Teacher -
Question #9 - Training is low.
Question #10 - Wish they would.
Question #11 - Wish they would.
Question #15 - They don't realize this is an important part of teaching.

I only get an aide during IGE time (2 hrs. a day). I don't know what they do during the rest of the school day. It's nice to have help during that time.

Teacher (Grade 5) -
Our aides were assigned to certain teachers and I do not receive any assistance from an aide.

Teacher -
Question #12 - I do not own art projects although most of them have helped other teachers.

(Why #3 (in directions) if I fill out the above?)

Since I took the liberty of adding the notes of explanation about many of the items may I add the following?

I have an aide who has had some classroom experience, some general aide training and the Karnes training. She is interested in her work, observant, quick to ask for help or follow advice. She makes a good personal appearance and has a pleasing personality. She is slightly handicapped in the pupil control area. I am very happy to have her. However, she has been the exception to the rule in my experience with aides.

The aide assigned to me last year worked very well performing non-instructional tasks, but upon being observed at the Karnes workshop by Dr. Karnes, was to be replaced by someone who could do instructional educational tasks, as required by the program. When school started no one had been selected to replace her and the aide who finally was assigned had had no Karnes training. She was transferred late in the first semester because of too much absence from the classroom and too many personal problems.

The next aide (the present one) has had no training of any type except a two-day Karnes workshop.

The Karnes program requires aides to be "teaching aides." The majority of their time should be spent instructing the children--another reason they should be highly skilled and thoroughly trained <u>before</u> entering the classroom. Agreed?

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

In this evaluation, responses as to their perceptions of the effectiveness of Model Cities Schools teacher aides were obtained from 155 persons employed in the Indianapolis Model Cities School. Included in the population were 9 administrators, 92 teachers, and 54 Model Cities School teacher aides. The major findings of this assessment were:

1. The perceptions of teachers and administrators in relationship to the effectiveness of Model Cities Schools teacher aides were very similar.

2. Model Cities Schools teacher aides perceived themselves as doing a better job than the administrators or teachers perceived them doing.

3. The responses of administrators, teachers, and aides indicated a need for helping improve the self-concept of children.

4. Both administrators and teachers felt that the aide could be more effective in assisting with classroom control and increasing the general morale of the school.

5. Approximately 65% of an aide's time was spent either in direct instruction of children or in the preparation of instructional materials.

6. There was a high degree of agreement among administrators, teachers, and aides as to time allocated to various tasks each week.

7. Additional comments indicate a need for re-examination of scheduling teacher aide time among the various teachers with whom they work.

8. In general, the Model Cities Schools teacher-aides are doing an effective job in contributing to the overall learning environment of Indianapolis Model Cities Schools as perceived by administrators, teachers, and teacher aides.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Resultants from the interpretations of the instrument utilized and the comments of the respondents, the following practices are suggested as means for increasing the effectiveness of Model Cities Schools teacher aides:

1. Utilize a screening device for new teacher aides to be hired. In addition to the present practices being used to screen new aides, an instrument such as the Fundamental Achievement Series (FAS) could be utilized to determine verbal and numerical ability. Each test takes 30 minutes, is administered by tape recording, and covers from basic literacy to somewhat beyond eighth grade level. These tests are obtainable at reasonable cost from The Psychological Corporation.

2. Utilize an achievement test to determine the best placement of aides. Use of the FAS tests, as described in the previous recommendation, would allow better placement and use of abilities in the Model Cities Schools Teacher Aide Program.

3. Develop an area of specialization in each teacher aide. In addition to functioning as a general teacher aide in instruction, instruction-related and clerical tasks, a speciality area should be developed. This would depend upon the individual's interest, ability, and the needs in the school of assignment. Some areas of specialization might be math, reading-language, art, music, etc.

4. Hold in-service workshops at various times during the school year. The purpose of the workshops should be two-fold: 1) to upgrade the present skills of teacher aides in basic task areas and 2) to develop needed on-the-job skills as identified by administrators, teachers, and the aides themselves.

5. Place teacher aides with teachers so that a personality is avoided. The effectiveness of teacher aides can be increased if this area is considered. Such a responsibility would seem to be that of the local school administrator.

6. Place teacher aides with those teachers who show a readiness for working with teacher aides. A portion of the in-service education of teachers should include sessions on how to utilize and work with a teacher aide effectively.

7. Relate to upgrading of needed teacher aide skills as identified in this study. As plans for in-service programs for teacher aides are made, the following areas should be covered as indicated by this study:

   a. increasing the general morale of the school.
   b. assisting teachers in classroom control by providing additional supervision.
   c. helping children improve their own self image.
   d. arranging educational bulletin boards.

8. Evaluate the effectiveness of Model Cities Schools teacher aides. This should be on a regularly scheduled basis. It ought to include a form of self-evaluation plus an evaluation by the teacher with whom the aide is working directly and the administrative personnel in the school to which the aide is assigned. Areas of strength should be noted for effective utilization of the aide. Additional training should be provided for those areas in need of improvement.

9. Concentrate aide time in blocks. It is recommended that aides be assigned to no more than three different teachers. This should be in fixed time blocks so that teachers might plan more effectively for the use of the aide's time.

APPENDIX

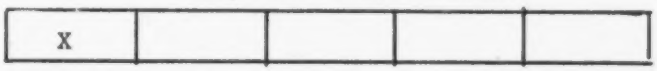
MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS
Teacher Aide Effectiveness

Directions:

Please read the statement and mark it as honestly as you can. Indicate the level of your feeling by marking an X inside one of the boxes below the statement.

Example:

Mary had a little lamb.



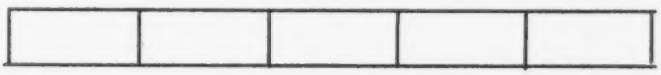
high agreement — low agreement

The X in the box at the left end of the scale indicates high agreement with the statement. Be sure to mark one of the boxes following each statement. All statements concern the work of Model Cities Schools Aides only!

STATEMENTS

Model Cities Schools Teacher Aides:

1. reduce the number of clerical tasks performed by teachers.

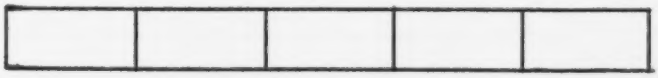


high agreement — low agreement

2. assist teachers in classroom control by providing additional supervision.

high agreement — low agreement

3. increase the general morale of the school.



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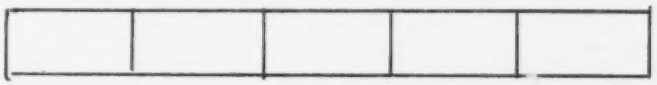
4. serve as a good adult model for children.



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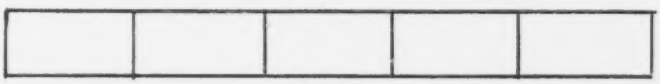
5. encourage oral language development by providing another adult in the classroom to whom children can talk.



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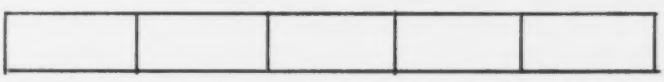
6. comfort children who are emotionally upset or assist children needing first aid.



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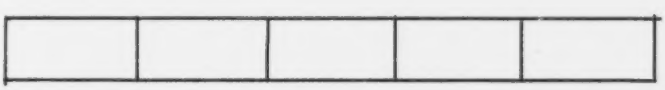
7. help the children with drill exercises or seatwork.



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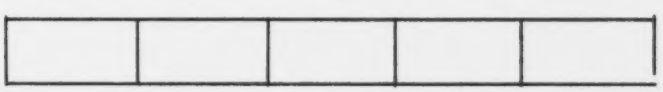
8. help the teacher prepare materials for instructional use.



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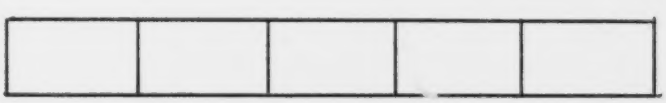
9. help children to learn more by working with them on an individual or group basis.



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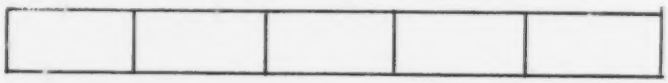
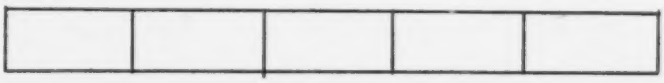
10. assist the teacher by operating audio-visual equipment.



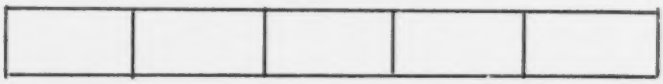
high agreement — low agreement

11. allow the teacher more teaching time by relieving her of non-teaching tasks and duties.



high agreement — low agreement

12. contribute to the learning environment of the classroom by arranging bulletin boards or exhibits.

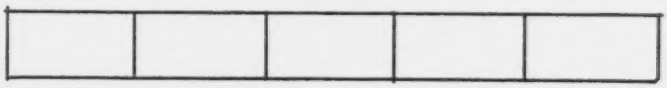


high agreement — low agreement

13. help children select library books on their reading and interest level.

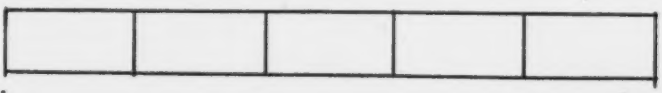
high agreement — low agreement

14. assist the teacher in simple housekeeping tasks.



high agreement — low agreement

15. help children improve their own self image by encouragement or positive comments on their school work or efforts.



high agreement — low agreement

Please identify yourself by checking the appropriate space.

I am a/an

administrator	_____	
teacher	_____	(please indicate grade level)
teacher aide	_____	

I am from school _____
(include number)

MODEL CITIES SCHOOLS
Teacher Aide Time Allocation

This evaluation is to help determine the amount of time which the Model Cities Schools devote to various types of duties each week. Place in the space to the left of the statement the percentage of time spent by Model Cities Aides in that type of duty. (A, B, C, D, E, and F should total 100%.) Please mark the time you feel is actually spent by Model Cities Schools Aides, not as you feel it should be.

_____% A. Percent of time instructing children in academic tasks such as remedial reading, math drill, etc.

_____% B. Percent of time involved with children in non-academic tasks such as personal problems, recreational activities, loading buses, etc.

_____% C. Percent of time involved in the preparation of or correcting instructional materials such as bulletin boards, correcting tests, grading papers, etc.

_____% D. Percent of time involved with non-instructional clerical tasks such as collecting money, typing, etc.

_____% E. Percent of time involved with housekeeping chores such as cleaning-up, dusting shelves, etc.

_____% F. Percent of time spent in other tasks. Please identify the major tasks _____.

Total 100%